

# New Directions, January 2026 Newsletter



The individuals who attend Griffin Rath in Maynooth, and all the staff, recently said goodbye to Claire Landers (Speech and Language Therapist). Claire was a fantastic advocate for those who attend the location. Please turn to page 6 to see what else Griffin Rath have been up too.



Anne from Elvira won big at the Bingo in Uaisle recently!



Three individuals who attend Re Nua attended an event in St Patricks Cathedral



Grace from Glencommeragh was cruising on public transport this month

This first month of the year we explore the following pillar which underpins New Directions, '**Support for Making Choices and Plans**'.



What do we mean when we talk about **choice**?

To have choice means possessing the power, freedom, or opportunity to select between two or more possibilities. It signifies personal autonomy, enabling individuals to make decisions about their actions, behaviours, and future, rather than being forced into a single path. It implies having options, control, and the responsibility of the outcome.

# Meet the Staff Member

My name is Rick Ashe; I am the ICT Administrator for the Kildare region (sometimes Dublin too). Basically, I am the guy who keeps your computers running! I have been with SJOG Liffey Services for just over three years now.

I have worked many jobs and had many roles, my experience in SJOG has been polar opposites to any other position I have held. The love and care you all show to each other is a true inspiration and makes coming to work each day a joy. Having been recently diagnosed as Neuro-Divergent myself, I feel a special kinship with the Organisation, Staff and Service Users.

I am an avid animal lover, I have three dogs (AL - 19yrs, Theo - 9 yrs and Smudge who is four) I also have two disabled cats! (Lenny is 16 yrs and blind and Andy Pandy is 17yrs and missing a front leg!). Cars and driving are a huge interest of mine, expensive as it is! I spent many years driving motorbikes and absolutely adored the experience, having kids makes you rethink your priorities though. Would like to give a shout out to my 4 children my four kids, Darragh, Nathan, Andrew and Eve.

I wish you all a very Merry New Year and best wishes for the future.

Thanks,  
Rick.



# Glencommeragh Day Service



Grace who attends Glencommeragh Day Service recently hit the January sales in Liffey valley. Grace was supported to use public transport to travel to Liffey Valley and the staff who support Grace are so proud of her and the amazing progress she has made. Great work Grace!

Oisín was delighted to be back in his day service after the Christmas closure. Here he is getting out and about in his community on the bus. In this photo, Oisín was going to get a McDonalds and buy batteries for his keyboard. Music is very important to Oisín.



# A Poem by Green Gables

## Memories of Christmas

Christmas spirit, festive season  
Spending time with family.  
We all love our Christmas traditions,  
Christmas eve mass, going to see my friends mam sing in  
the choir.  
Going to Granny's house and seeing my cousins.  
Karaoke, grandad's Christmas dinner,  
Dad asleep on the couch.... snoring and full of turkey!  
The city center, full of lights.  
The Guinness add, the Coca-Cola truck...  
"Holidays are coming!"  
Cinema trips, full of kids.  
The live crib at the Manson House,  
seeing people doing the 12 pubs.  
The Christmas windows in Arnott's and Brown Thomas.  
Hot chocolate and wandering to see the festive lights.  
The Mosque is a great alternative,  
It's a time for community!  
Santa's list, to be checked twice.  
Shaking presents under the tree.... I'll guess what it is!  
One year I got a big speaker,  
Sylvanian family, The Red Hotel!  
I got a dance mat,  
A Barbie dream house!  
Bikes, action men and skateboards, they were all surprises.  
Another year I got a camera and a blank photo album to fill,  
there's still  
a few blank pages.  
It's all about wanting to be a kid again.

# Griffin Rath Day Service



Dance teacher Sandra came to Griffin Rath to facilitate a group Zumba class just before Christmas and everyone really enjoyed it.



Una is a huge Joe Dolan fan and recently visited the statue dedicated to the singer in his home town of Mullingar.

# All Together Social

## Valentine`s Disco



**The Plaza Hotel, Tallaght**

**February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 @ 7pm – 10pm**

**Tickets €15**

**Contact Joe:**

**[Joseph.Roche@sjog.ie](mailto:Joseph.Roche@sjog.ie)**

**087 408 6601**



# Crossroads Day Service

Crossroads Day Service, along with Re Nua Day Service, came together with the SLT department to demonstrate LAMH signs through Christmas Carols.

It was a great success. The group performed songs at the Supervisors Forum on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The group also performed their LAMH signs at the Friday morning music session in the Coachman's in December. Everyone got involved and enjoyed these sessions, they certainly got people into the festive mood. A huge well done to all involved!



# THE LAUNCH OF THE LADIES LOUNGE

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Time: 2-3pm

Venue: The Coachman's,  
St Raphael's Campus

A new space for women to  
connect, create, and grow



# Elvira Day Service

Since the Skills Encore term started at Greenhills Community College in 2025, Josh Kearney and Karl Brady, have been attending and taking part in 2 – 3 modules.

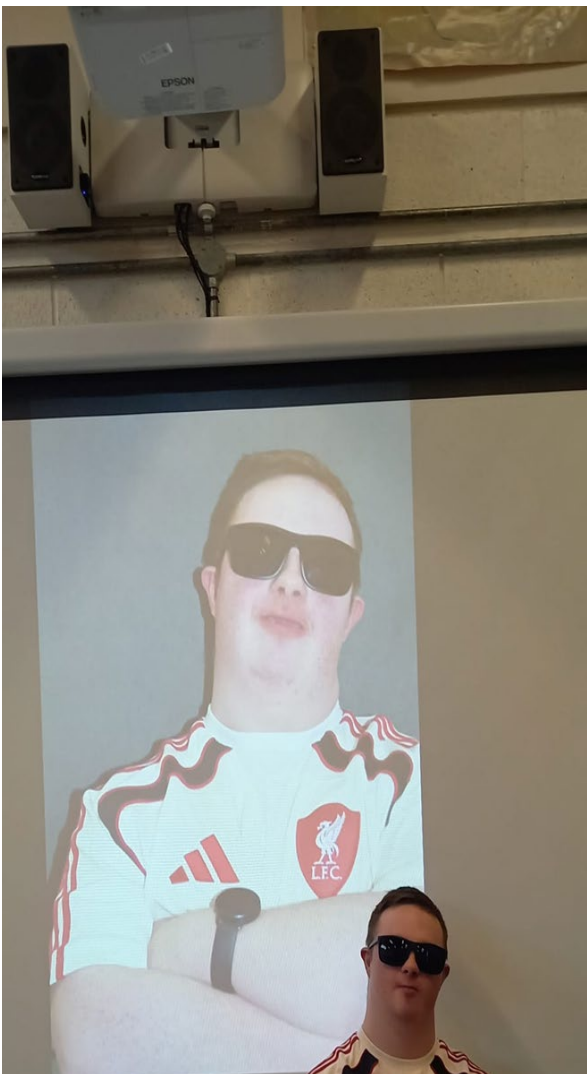
The Art section has definitely been a big hit for both, as the lads have been working hard to complete all their course work and also having fun while attending.



The two friends were working on Self Portraits, using a camera and photography. They will mirror sketch a half of their portrait exactly as it was photocopied.

College is currently taking a three week break, but in the meantime the staff in Elvira can keep their skills up and practise some Art in the afternoons on site.

Recently Elvira partnered up with Avila and ran an onsite Art Class led by staff member Erika. We will keep you updated on the students work and any QQI Certificates they achieve. 😊




Above in Karl's self portrait and left is Josh's self portrait up on the projector in Art Class on Tuesday the 13.01.2026. Great work!

# Re Nua Day Service



The service users chose to have their Christmas dinner in Re Nua this year, they said they had a lovely day and the atmosphere was so homely for them. Well done to the staff who always ensure the Service Users are made to feel happy and content at such an important time of year, the place looks so festive and beautiful.



# **Valentine's Day Party**

**13TH FEB 2026**

**The Coachmans  
at 11:00AM**

**Entry €2**

**Singing Competition  
Trophy for winner  
Medals for 2nd and 3rd**

**In aid of our athletes going  
to Special Olympics  
IrelandGames  
June 2026**

# Avoca Day Service



Two Gentlemen from Avoca Day Service were visiting the library in both Celbridge and Leixlip recently, as part of their programme. The individuals have just joined the library and were getting some books out, both have been involved in choices and planning around the day to travel to different locations. This ties in very well with the theme for January's newsletter around making choices and plans. Well done to you both.



St John  
of God   
Community Services

Liffey

# Las Granadas Day Service

The Drama Class from Las Granadas Day Service in Tallaght, led by their teacher Lairs, put on a Christmas/New Year panto recently. Many of the men and women from other day service locations, as well as family and friends, came along to see the show.



It was a fantastic performance, full of laughter, and the show was enjoyed by all. Afterwards, all the guests were offered tea or coffee and delicious snacks. It was a wonderful way to start the New Year.



# CoDesign 2026

We will start our Co-Design programme 2026 with five new digital projects. These include an accessible music app, a friendship app called FriendSnap (designed without photos of people), an app focused on the co-design process, and Brian's Travel Stuff, and the Money App.

Brian will work with Daniel to co-design and build Brian's Travel Stuff. They have already used AI tools to design a logo and explore ideas for the app. We are really looking forward to seeing how their ideas develop over the coming months.

The projects will be co-designed by 24 co-designers working with 30 computer science students in TUDublin for the next three months. Co-design builds key skills in design thinking, making choices, problem-solving, and sharing ideas to solve real-life challenges.





# The 10 right ways to take Medicine Safely



Scan the QR Code to Watch our Video on 10 Right Ways to take Medication Safely.



Some people take their own medication.

Some people get help from staff.

Both ways are OK.

The most important thing is taking medicine safely.



## 1. The Right Person's Medication



Only take medication that is for you.

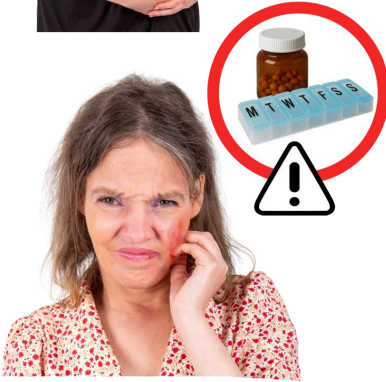
Do not take anyone else's medication.



## 2. The Right Medication

Take the right medication for your sickness.

Ask someone if you are unsure what medication to take.



## 3. The Right amount of Medication

Take only the amount the doctor says.

Not too much, not too little.

This helps the medicine work well and keeps you safe.





#### 4. The Right Time

Take your medication at the right time.  
This helps the medicine work better.



#### 5. The Right Way

Take your medication as the doctor says.  
If it is a tablet, don't crush it without  
asking the doctor first.





## 6. The Right Reason



Know what each medication is for.

If you don't know, ask someone.

This helps you understand why you need it.



## 7. The Right Information about your medication



You should be able to access Information about the medication.

You should be aware of things the medicine might do to your body.

The information should be explained in a way that you understand.



Choice



## 8. The Right to Choose

You can choose to take or not take your medicine.

You need to know and understand the risks if you don't take your medicine.

Staff or family will listen and support you.



## 9. The Right Storage

Medication must be stored safely in the right place.

If you take your own medication, staff can support you to store it right.

If staff support you to take your medication, they will store it for you.





## 10. The Right way to record the medication you have taken.



Staff write down on your Kardex when you take your medication.

This keeps you safe and well.



**Scan the QR Code to Watch our Video on 10 Right Ways to take Medication Safely.**



If you have any questions you can contact Rebecca Lynch

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**<https://vimeo.com/1152279828?>**



**DATTN**  
Digital and Assistive Technology  
Training Network

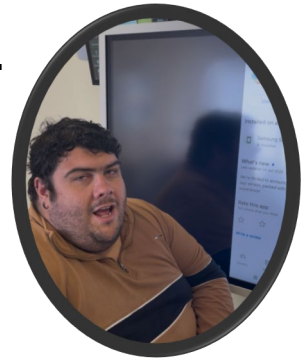
**the wheel**

Stronger Charities.  
Stronger Communities.

# How Assistive Technology Supports Daily Living You are invited to a free online webinar

Assistive Technology can support people in everyday life.  
It can help with things like:


- reminders and routines
- getting out and about independently
- health and wellbeing
- making choices and plans



This webinar will share practical examples and real-life stories from people with lived experience of disability and Assistive Technology.

## Webinar Details

 **Date: 29 January 2026**

 **Time: 12:00 – 12:45**

 **Platform: Microsoft Teams**

**Register  
NOW**

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/68a7ca2b-7a8a-42f9-b066-237d738cbb55@5e70b29f-d5ea-45af-8a0d-9d8f596877be>



# DigiCoaching supporting Choice

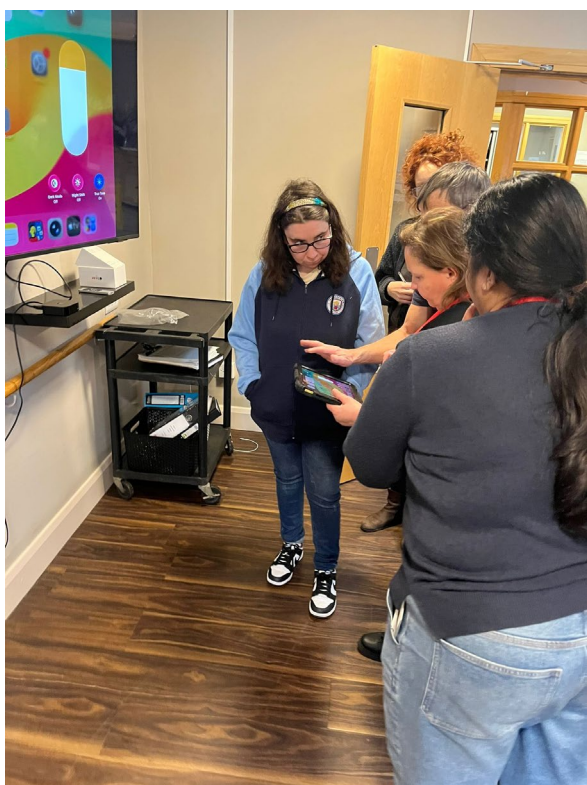
The DigiCoaches are supporting choice and planning across Liffey Services by helping staff use digital assistive technology in everyday practice. Last week, Amy, one of the paid DigiCoaches, worked with the team in Arranmore, Islandbridge. Amy set up a new Apple TV for the service and showed the staff how to use it confidently. The Apple TV can support people to watch, choose, and take part in activities in ways that suit them.

Amy also shared two helpful apps with the staff team.

The Choiceworks Calendar app is a digital visual schedule. It helps people see what is happening during their day or week. This supports understanding, routine, and choice.



# DigiCoaching supporting Staff



Amy also showed the team Book Creator, an app that supports choice-making, communication, and planning. It can be used to create personalised books using photos, symbols, text, and audio. The staff team engaged very well and began using the technology to support people in making choices and taking part in planning their day.

Amy will return to the service in a few weeks to see how the team is getting on and to continue supporting the use of the Apple TV and apps.

This work shows that DigiCoaches supporting staff as well as peer coaching. DigiCoaching helps staff use digital assistive technology in a practical, rights-based way to support choice, communication, and person-centred planning. [DigiCoach.ie](https://www.digicoach.ie)



We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who applied to take part in the SONGS project. We were delighted with the interest and the quality of applications.

We are excited to share that six people will be working on the project with Hans and composer Karen Power at the end of February. The group brings a wide range of ideas, experiences, and creativity from across the region.

A special thank you to the Leadership Team in Tearmann Mhuire for their support and for hosting the workshops. We are really looking forward to getting started and creating music together.



## AT in Action: From Rights to Reality



Sponsored by:



**RETHINK  
IRELAND**  
Our Social  
Innovation  
Fund

# You are Invited to CHAT AT in ACTION

Join us for a **CHAT (Community Hub for Accessible Technology)** event focused on how Assistive Technology (AT) supports people's rights in everyday life.

This event shares real experiences of how AT helps people to:

- communicate
- make choices and decisions
- take part in daily life
- work, learn, and build relationships

You will hear directly from AT users, families, staff, and advocates.

## Event Details



**Date: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb 26**



**Time: 11:00 – 2:35**



**Platform: Hybrid**



## Register

## NOW

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/chat-at-in-action-from-rights-to-reality-tickets-1980486346977?>

# Liffey Voices January

## 28<sup>th</sup> January 11am

### Cookstown/ Celbridge / OnZoom

#### Liffey Voices



Self Advocacy group from St John of God Liffey Services



Engage with self-advocacy and empower yourself



#### Connect with advocates

Diverse advocacy content

Resource library

Engage with advocates

Register



#### LiffeyVoice Team

Diverse advocacy content

Resource library

Engage with advocates

Explore our Team



#### Campaign

Empowering advocacy sessions

Resource library

Connect with advocates

Our Campaign

Liffey Voice Registration



<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/474389762?pwd=S3JSaFNvY2RVVnpxSGY1ZjAxUjNzZz09>

Meeting ID: 474 389 762

Passcode: 054429

# Thank You for Reading...

On a final note, I would like to remind you all that the monthly 'What is New Directions?' Online Engage sessions are now pre-recorded and the link to watch the January edition featuring Doris and I is here;

**[January 2026 New Directions Online Engage on Vimeo](#)**



Could everyone please continue to send all your good news stories into me, we love to celebrate all the successes happening across Liffey Region's Day Services.

## Get in touch

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**st John  
of God**   
Community Services

Liffey

This easy read booklet about New Directions information was made by Donna Hughes.